

Theory

[Sora Han - Abolition: At Issue, In Any Case \(/issue3/theory/han\)](/issue3/theory/han)

[Shana Agid - Making Anyway: Education, Designing, Abolition \(/issue3/theory/agid\)](/issue3/theory/agid)

[David Stein - Full Employment for the Future \(/issue3/theory/stein\)](/issue3/theory/stein)

[Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners - Beyond Crisis: College in Prison through the Abolition Undercommons \(/issue3/theory/harkins-meiners\)](/issue3/theory/harkins-meiners)

Introduction

Patricia Ticineto Clough

Lateral's Theory Thread offers essays that critically explore the relationship of carceral and educational institutions—but not as alternatives to one another as often has been assumed in various kinds of social activism. The authors of these essays, Sora Han, David Stein, Shana Agid, Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners, assume the tightly knotted interrelationship of prisons and schools and instead address the question posed by Han: is there something, being affirmed in the identity or identification as a “prison abolitionist” today? Recognizing that abolition is an event that has yet to arrive, the authors agree that the prison abolitionist can only take up “the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society.” The authors draw insight from Fred Moten's and Stefano Harney's writings on the undercommons and are inspired by them to take up questioning everything, making complaints without filing them—being negligent in a negligent set of institutions, leaping from knowledge that prosecutes the state to a performative of making the case. An approach to teaching is offered that foregrounds practices of unlearning, wrenching-open circuits, and encouraging an imagination for abolition—or as Moten and Harney have put it “stepping out of this skeptical of the known into an inadequate confrontation with what exceeds it and oneself....” Suggestions are offered that have been offered before but it is time to take them seriously again. Harkins and Meiners list several but two stand out: for all kinds of organizing, this one: Be prepared to walk away from the work; depersonalize investment, do not “own” the program or the process. For learning institutions of all sorts, this one: Work to develop structurally

significant student boards that have real power to evaluate and shape courses.

Each of the authors startles us, urging us to move from the 'no' of dismantlement to a terrifying "yes" of a giving in giving up and giving way and giving away.